

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-16 EUR-25 NEA-10 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 /166 W

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R 010056Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3106

INFO USMISSION USUN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 2561

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VS, AS

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DECIDES TO VOTE AGAINST
INVITATIONS TO PRG IN INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

1. SUMMARY: VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR THIEP INFORMED CHARGE APR 30 THAT AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WILLESEE HAD TOLD HIM THAT AUSTRALIA WILL VOTE AGAINST (RATHER THAN ABSTAIN) ON INVITATION TO PRG TO PARTICIPATE IN WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY IN GENEVA, BEGINNING MAY 7. WILLESEE ALSO INDICATED THAT THIS WOULD BE AUSTRALIAN POSITION AT OTHER INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS. THIEP HAS BEEN TOLD THAT POSITION HAS BEEN APPROVED BY PRIME MINISTER, ALTHOUGH WE WONDER IF ISSUE IS FINALLY DISPOSED OF. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE EVENING OF APR 30 DEPARTING VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR THIEP SAID THAT MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS WILLESEE HAD INFORMED HIM APR 25 THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD VOTE AGAINST (RATHER THAN ABSTAIN) ON INVITATIONS TO PRG TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS. THIEP SAID THAT WILLESEE HAD GIVEN HIM ASSURANCES IN CONTEXT OF WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY MEETING IN GENEVA MAY 7 BUT, IN RESPONSE TO FURTHER QUESTION BY THIEP, HAD CLEARLY STATED THAT SAME POSITION WOULD BE ADOPTED AT OTHER INTERNATIONAL
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CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS. VIETNAMESE EMBASSY COUNSELOR

QUANG TOLD EMBOFF APR 30 THAT PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM
HAD APPROVED VOTING AGAINST INVITATION TO PRG.

3. VIETNAMESE EMBASSY HAS CLEARLY HANDLED MATTER VERY
WELL. AMBASSADOR THEIP, IN APPROACHING MATTER, FIRST
CONTACTED DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER BARNARD, MINISTER FOR
EDUCATION BEAZLEY, AND MINISTER FOR TOURISM STEWART,
ALL OF WHOM HAVE SHOWN CONSIDERABLY SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT
FOR GVN IN PAST. BEAZLEY, IN PARTICULAR, CONTACTED
PRIME MINISTER AND WILLESEE TO PRESS HIS VIEW THAT
AUSTRALIA SHOULD NOT VOTE FOR PRG INVITATION.

4. COMMENT: WHILE AMBASSADOR THIEP WAS ASSURED BY
WILLESEE THAT GOA WOULD CONTINUE TO OPPOSE INVITATIONS
TO PRG IN INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS, RATHER THAN ABSTAIN,
WE WONDER IF MATTER IS FINALLY DISPOSED OF. IT IS
PROBABLY OF VALUE TO LABOR GOVERNMENT NOT TO HAVE THIS
ISSUE COME UP IN CONTEXT OF PRESENT ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN
(POLLING DAY IS MAY 18), AND WE BELIEVE THAT SOME ELEMENTS
IN DFA WANT TO SEE AUSTRALIA ADOPT NEUTRAL POSITION ON
ISSUE. IF LABOR GOVERNMENT IS RE-ELECTED, WE ASSUME
MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS TRADE CAIRNS WILL CONTINUE TO
SUPPORT ENHANCED INTERNATIONAL POSITION FOR PRG AND
GRUNK. MOREOVER, IN PAST FEW DAYS PRESS HAS REPORTED
THAT CARINS WILL SEEK ELECTION AS DEPUTY LEADER OF
LABOR PARTY AFTER ELECTIONS. CAIRNS HAS NOW
DENIED REPORT, BUT HE UNDOUBTEDLY HAS ENOUGH SUPPORT
WITHIN LABOR CAUCUS TO MAKE A FIGHT FOR THE POSITION,
IF HE CHOOSES TO DO SO. AS DEPUTY LEADER OF ALP (AND
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IF LABOR WINS), CAIRNS WOULD BE
IN STRONG POSITION TO SUPPORT RANGE OF LEFTIST CAUSES,
INCLUDING PRG AND GRUNK. AT ANY RATE, OUR DEMARCHE
(REFTEL) AND ACTIONS OF VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR HAVE
SERVED TO REVERSE AN UNDESIRABLE GOA POSITION.
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